

Community resources

[Follow us on Twitter](#) [Check our Reddit](#) [Twitter this](#) [Digg this](#) [page](#) [Contact us on IRC](#)

courage is contagious

Viewing cable 08MANAGUA944, PLC CONVENTION SHOWS ALEMAN IN CONTROL,

If you are new to these pages, please read an introduction on the [structure of a cable](#) as well as how to [discuss them](#) with others. See also the [FAQs](#)

Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

To understand the justification used for the classification of each cable, please use this [WikiSource](#) article as reference.

Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#08MANAGUA944**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
08MANAGUA944	2008-07-24 16:39	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	Embassy Managua

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-30/Mundo/NotasSecundarias/Mundo2758456.aspx>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-30/Mundo/NotasSecundarias/Mundo2758467.aspx>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-30/Mundo/NotasSecundarias/Mundo2758468.aspx>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-30/Mundo/NotasSecundarias/Mundo2758464.aspx>
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/4103/la-embusa-y-el-gabinete-de-ortega>
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/4104/d-rsquo-escoto-en-onu-ldquo-un-desafio-de-ortega-a-ee-uu-rdquo>
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/4102/estrada-y-la-ldquo-doble-cara-rdquo-ante-ee-uu>
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/3966/la-ldquo-injerencia-rdquo-de-ee-uu-en-el-2006>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-23/Mundo/Relacionados/Mundo2758764.aspx>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-23/Mundo/NotaPrincipal/Mundo2758753.aspx>
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/4041/millones-de-dolares-sin-control-y-a-discrecion>
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/4040/la-ldquo-injerencia-rdquo-de-venezuela-en-2006>
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/4047/rodrigo-barreto-enviado-de-ldquo-vacaciones-rdquo>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-16/Mundo/NotasSecundarias/Mundo2757239.aspx>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-16/Mundo/NotaPrincipal/Mundo2746658.aspx>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-16/Mundo/Relacionados/Mundo2757244.aspx>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-16/Mundo/Relacionados/Mundo2746673.aspx>
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/3991/dra-yadira-centeno-desmiente-cable-diplomatico-eeuu>
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/3968/pellas-pronostico-a-eeuu-victoria-de-ortega-en-2006>
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/3967/barreto-era-ldquo-fuente-confiable-rdquo-para-eeuu>

VZCZCXYZ0001
PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHMU #0944/01 2061639
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 241639Z JUL 08
FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2939
INFO RUEHZA/WHA CENTRAL AMERICAN COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUMIAAA/CDR USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANAGUA 000944

SIPDIS

STATE FOR WHA/CEN
NSC FOR FISK AND ALVARADO

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/23/2018
TAGS: [KDEM](#) [NU](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#)
SUBJECT: PLC CONVENTION SHOWS ALEMAN IN CONTROL,
MONTEALEGRE'S POSITION TENUOUS

REF: MANAGUA 880

Classified By: DCM Richard M. Sanders, Reasons 1.4(b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: The Liberal Constitutional Party (PLC) held its national convention July 11 outside Managua, with the nominal purpose of showing a united front against the Ortega government, ratifying its candidate list for the November municipal elections, and supporting Managua mayoral candidate Eduardo Montealegre while opposing the removal of his immunity regarding the CENIS case (reftel). The actual results of the convention showed Arnaldo Aleman in clear control of the party, a Liberal opposition that remains to be united, and tenuous support for Montealegre from the PLC leadership, which may yet find a way to force him off the ticket. As the country heads toward elections, the continued division within the Liberals could strengthen the FSLN's position and lead to an Ortega victory in November.

Aleman: The Leader of the Pack, but not the Opposition

¶2. (C) In the PLC keynote address, former president and convicted felon Arnaldo Aleman tried to rally the Liberals by criticizing the Sandinista government's poor performance in its first 18 months. (Note: Aleman freely criticized the Sandinista government, but never criticized President Ortega by name.) He also blasted former president Bolanos, whom he blamed for splitting the Liberals and setting the stage for their loss in the 2006 presidential elections. Aleman said the PLC-Vamos con Eduardo (VCE) alliance was the winning ticket for the November municipal elections, highlighting the ballot for Managua with Eduardo Montealegre (VCE) for mayor and Enrique Quinonez (PLC) as deputy mayor.

¶3. (C) The crowd's reaction to Aleman demonstrated he was still able to rally key elements of the PLC base. Cheers for "Arnaldo" were far louder and outnumbered any cheers for "Eduardo" or Aleman's nemesis Enrique Quinonez, a tough-talking PLC National Assembly deputy and candidate for vice-mayor of Managua who has made publicly criticizing Aleman his mission over the last six months. La Trinchera, the PLC mouthpiece daily paper, confirmed Aleman's position in the party by stating he "demonstrated he was the party's leader and the PLC recognized his leadership." Despite the clear support for Aleman, there were some instances of VCE members with posters denouncing the Ortega-Aleman pact; these were quickly taken away by Aleman loyalists. These incidents were limited as most of Quinonez supporters (who oppose Aleman) were prohibited from entering the convention, leading to some violent confrontations between Quinonez and Aleman

supporters.

The PLC Supports Montealegre ... Kind Of

14. (C) The PLC ratified its slate of candidates for the November municipal elections, and singled out its support for Montealegre and Quinonez in the Managua race. Aleman personally pledged his support to Montealegre and claimed that Montealegre has the support of the PLC troops behind him. However, Aleman has taken steps to keep the door open to remove Montealegre and Quinonez if (or more likely when) necessary. First, the convention authorized the PLC executive committee (CEN) to replace at any time any candidate not deemed capable of winning. The CEN is comprised of Aleman loyalists and has recently issued public warnings to Quinonez that he risks being removed for his public criticisms of Aleman and the PLC leadership. This authority provides one key avenue for Aleman to eliminate any chance of Montealegre participating in the elections. PLC contacts and members of Montealegre's campaign team have suggested to us that Quinonez could be forced out in late August or early September as a first step to removing Montealegre.

15. (C) The second avenue available to Aleman in manipulating to remove Montealegre would be to strip the candidate of his immunity as a deputy in the National Assembly based on the government's corruption charges (reftel). To remove a National Assembly deputy's immunity ("desaforacion"), 47 of the 92 members in the assembly must vote in favor of the motion. Currently 44 members (all 38 of

the FSLN and 6 of the ALN) are expected to vote against Montealegre. Five deputies are "independent," three of which usually vote with the FSLN. The FSLN is working hard to find the votes to strip Montealegre of his immunity and it is widely suspected Aleman is also prepared to throw in a few PLC votes to ensure the mayoral candidate's political demise and strengthen his own leadership in the liberal ranks. Aleman's involvement in this process was alluded to when PLC Secretary General Francisco Aguirre Sacasa told the DCM that "the majority" of the PLC would vote against Montealegre's loss of immunity -- implying that a handful of PLC deputies could go over to the FSLN on the vote.

16. (C) The National Assembly will return from recess August 6 and a petition to lift Montealegre's immunity is expected soon after. Given legislative procedures, a vote probably would not occur until late of September. This would coincide with the beginning of the official campaigns - approximately one month prior to the elections.

Comment

17. (C) The PLC convention left no doubt Aleman is in firm control of the party and is positioning himself as the sole "alternative" to Ortega. Aleman has followed the convention with nearly daily media appearances or campaign stops, further demonstrating his resurgent and overt political control over the Liberal alliance. At the same time, the convention equally showed there is still no real unity among the liberal factions, which continue to maintain separate campaign structures in many municipalities, including Managua.

18. (C) Aleman's public pledge to support Montealegre belies the fact that he is retaining all the tools to betray Montealegre should this be needed to preserve the "Pacto" with Ortega which has kept him out of jail despite his conviction and sentencing on massive corruption charges. The loss of immunity, or the removal of Quinonez as his vice-mayoral candidate, could force Montealegre to drop out of the race. The PLC would then be certain to replace him with a loyal partisan who would further alienate an already

disillusioned electorate. This could weaken the Liberals,
lead to a strengthened FSLN, and a resounding win for Ortega
in the November elections.

TRIVELLI